DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 305 931 IR 052 698

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TITLE Infopower at Northland Pioneer College.
INSTITUTION Northland Pioneer Coll., Holbrook, Ariz.
PUB DATE May 88
NOTE 10p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Continuing Education; Distance Education; Higher Education; Learning Resources Centers; *Media Specialists; *Paraprofessional Personnel; Public Libraries; *Rural Areas; School Libraries
IDENTIFIERS *Arizona

ABSTRACT

This paper considers various ways in which InfoPower, the recently instituted library/media technology program at Northland Pioneer College in Arizona, can assist in the training of professional librarians and paraprofessional library staff, particularly those in rural, isolated areas who may not be able to attend traditional classes. The need for making such training available to both professional and paraprofessional staff is discussed, and it is noted that both the 2-year paraprofessional degree program and the 1-year certificate program in library/media technology have been designed with the rural areas in mind. Descriptions of two courses to be offered during the fall semester of 1988--Introduction to Library/Media Services and Church Librarianship--indicate that instruction will be offered on an individualized basis and that students will be required to come to the campus only twice, once for an orientation session at the beginning, and once for a concluding seminar at the end of the course. An application for funding for a summer institute to take place in 1989 is noted, and a discussion of the need for continuing education opportunities for graduate professional librarians in the area concludes the paper. (EW)

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INFOPOWER AT NORTHLAND PIONEER COLLEGE

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INTRODUCTION

INFOPOWER AT NORTHLAND PIONEER COLLEGE is a reaction to a national video conference for school librarians which was held in April, 1988. Although primarily intended for school librarians, this conference had considerable food for thought for librarians and library staff members working in community college library or learning resource settings, as well as those of us involved in library/media technology programs.

This paper is intended to be a reaction to this video conference, as it can be applied to learning resources at Northland Pioneer College, a small decentralized community college serving rural Northeastern Arizona. Included are some ideas on how our library/media technology program may assist in training individuals in Arizona who may not be able to attend traditional classes, as well as some concerns about continuing education for Arizona's graduate professional librarians, particularly those in rural isolated settings.

--Allen P. Rothlisberg

INFOPOWER AT NORTHLAND PIONEER COLLEGE

I have many areas of concern which I feel relate directly to Infopower at Northland Pioneer College.

There are ninety school districts which offer no library service to their students or faculty in Arizona. I feel it is up to the professionals in the field to offer assistance whenever possible, to give these school districts a chance at achieving some kind of library service. I feel that something is better than nothing.

One way to achieve this is to make some kind of library education available to these school districts. Northland Pioneer College is committed to making a post-secondary education available to individuals at an affordable cost, close to their home environments. During the 1987-1988 school year, a two-year paraprofessional degree program, and a one year certificate program in library/media technology was inaugurated. Many of the courses taught in this program have been individualized to the point where the student can work at his own pace in many instances to complete course work. This library/media technology program has been designed with the rural areas in mind. It caters especially to individuals who are working in one person libraries, and to individuals who must work primarily without professional supervision. This program would be ideal to train

paraprofessionals to work in the ninety school districts that do not have library service, as well as train individuals to work in areas that do have libraries, but where it has been difficult if not impossible to employ trained individuals.

Because it is difficult to get individuals to travel long distances for training on a regular basis, Northland Pioneer College is willing to offer instruction on an individualized basis. During the fall semester, 1988, two library/media technology courses will be offered in this way. The first course is LIB 102--Introduction to Library/Media Services. This is the introductory course for the library/media technology program. The second course is LIB 199--Church Librarianship, a soup to nuts course for individuals who are interested in working in small library settings. It offers a smattering of training in a wide variety of areas, whereby an individual can survive in a small library setting, like a church library. It is not a course in theology, but it does teach networking, whereby the students enrolled can get to know other individuals working in neighboring church libraries as well as other libraries, all of whom are doing similar tasks. It encourages the sharing of resources, not only of the book and audio-visual variety, but also people resources, teaching an interdependence on individuals who are doing similar tasks. It encourages students to use the community resources in their areas, by getting to know all the library

personnel serving a particular community. After this is done, the student is encouraged to explore the strengths of each particular library setting, and to capitalize on these strengths.

In both of these courses, the student will come to Show Low for an orientation at the beginning of the semester. We cannot offer mail registration at this time. Each student is required to come within the geographical boundaries of the Navajo County Community College District (Northland Pioneer College) to register. The student will be given an orientation packet which will include all assignments. The student will be free to complete assignments on his own. The instructor will act as a course facilitator throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, a concluding seminar will be held. This will give the student an opportunity to wrap up any course experiences, and to share learning experiences with other students. These courses will be open to anyone, statewide, if the individual is willing to come to Show Low to register and is motivated to complete the course. It will eliminate the need to travel long distances on a regular basis.

Because Northland Pioneer College is firmly committed to working with distance education, and to helping individuals who cannot come to classes on a weekly basis, we have applied for a Higher Education Act grant for a summer institute to train school and public library employees in rurally isolated areas. If funded, the institute will take

place during the summer of 1989. It will enable individuals to take nine credit hours during the summer. Again, instructors would act as facilitators, and instruction would be individualized to interact effectively with the student's particular library. This will give these individuals a chance at getting library education in their home settings or environments.

I am not opposed to raising the professional requirements of individuals working in school libraries, but I feel that we need to be realistic. I feel we must get some kind of trained individual in each school library setting, and I feel that some training is better than no training. The master's degree professional can be better used supervising and assisting those without such training. This will assure that some kind of quality supervised library program is administered in each school. There is not enough funding to provide a master's degree professional at the building level in each school. Small districts could contract with other districts to hire a master's degree professional to supervise and train individuals in smaller libraries. It might be a good idea to look into hiring a county school librarian in some of the rural counties with a high incidence of schools without library service. Cooperative arrangements need to be worked out between neighboring libraries and school districts in towns and cities, as well as counties. Because Navajo County is the only county in Arizona without county library service.

Northland Pioneer College has applied for a small Title III grant to create a consortium of cooperating libraries for planning purposes. What comes out of this consortium will be up to the members of the consortium, but we need to get everyone talking and working with one another. We may decide that a county library district is the answer, and if this is so, we will need to work together to get the individual residents of Navajo County to back such a proposal.

I am firmly committed to continuing education as a library professional. I would like to take advantage of some of this continuing education, but it is extremely difficult for me to go to library school classes in Tucson one day a week. Travel time is 10 hours to and from Tucson, and classes are not given on Saturdays. I have an M. L. S. and do not wish to get another M. L. S., although I would like graduate credit should I complete graduate level coursework. The University of Arizona does not grant graduate credit to any individuals not enrolled in a degree program. Coursework by extension is available in the Phoenix area. I am in communication with a library school faculty member who is interested in packaging courses and making them available to us in the hinterlands. I am not sure how long this will take, but I am committed to working on it until something takes place. I am also committed to doing all that I can to get the University of Arizona to grant graduate credit to individuals, whether or not they

wish to enroll in a graduate program. This has been done before, and it can be done again, but it takes individuals who are firmly committed to such a program, and also individuals who are committed to this type of educational delivery system. I am more than willing to work on this project. Northland Pioneer College has assumed a leadership role in this area for lower division undergraduate courses. Perhaps those involved in teaching upper division and graduate level courses will follow our lead. The University of Oklahoma has a center for graduate education which emphasizes field based experiences, and brings the student together once a year to complete intensive classroom experiences. Perhaps this is a model that could be used in Arizona. At any rate, Arizona needs to develop something that can be used effectively here. What works in Oklahoma does not necessarily work in Arizona, but we can learn from Oklahoma's experiences.

I am also very interested in using the entire community as a resource for the college learning resource centers. This reflects directly with Infopower. Faculty members in an institution can provide invaluable resources. I would like to design a questionnaire to be distributed to all faculty at the beginning of the 1988-1989 school year. This questionnaire would determine what faculty members would be willing to share their individual fields of expertise with students and community members who are interested in learning more information in these areas. This would

greatly amplify the audio-visual and print materials available on subjects of the faculty's expertise. A strong interaction in this area would encourage better use of our materials and services.

These are just a few of my ideas on how Infopower can work at Northland Pioneer College. I am sure that there are others, and the boundaries are limitless. I am committed to work in the areas I have mentioned as a start, and would be interested in working with others to achieve other goals as well.